

A publication of the DCFS  
Hispanic Advisory Committee

# Noticias

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor  
Bryan Samuels, Director

Winter Edition, 2005



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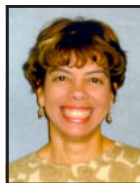
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## Welcome from the Chairperson

Madeline Gonzalez-Garcia

Welcome to the HAC's *Noticias* Winter edition. I hope you've enjoyed our 2004 *Noticias* Newsletters. *Noticias* will try to provide the information relevant to our profession that you requested through our survey. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the *Noticias* Subcommittee for their excellent work and especially for their dedication and commitment to our *Noticias* Newsletter.

I have so many people to thank. I cannot believe that in just a couple of months, my role as Hispanic Advisory Committee's Chairperson will end. It has been an exciting year. When I initially took on this responsibility, I was just a "little nervous" to say the least. It was not my term, but due to unexpected circumstances, I was put into a leadership role with a group of people whom I've grown to respect and treat like family. To all of you, I say, "Gracias. Without your continual support and confidence, I would not have been able to handle the challenges this leadership role presented. More importantly, I would never have experienced one of the most rewarding years here at DCFS."

This opportunity allowed me to take a hard look at my strengths and weaknesses. It was not easy to lead a group of Latinos whose child welfare experience totals over 100 years. These individuals possess an unwavering commitment to tackling issues that confront our children, families, and workers. Additionally, they did not allow obstacles to interfere with reaching their goals. These qualities served to reinforce and provide me the courage and determination needed to ensure that HAC's endeavors moved forward with the mission of ensuring that our Latino families and children were provided with the highest quality of professional, cultural and linguistic services.

To all *Noticias* readers, once again I encourage you to join us. HAC cannot and will not progress forward without your support and involvement. We are all busy in our daily work to ensure the safety of children, the unification of families, and the quality of services, but joining together can only make these efforts stronger and more satisfying. Don't allow more time to pass without ever being part of this dedicated leadership group. Make your years with DCFS more fulfilling, enjoyable and satisfying by committing to work together on issues impacting Latino families. Take the time to submit your nomination form for the Hispanic Advisory Committee, or at least be willing to get involved with one of our subcommittees.

Gracias por el apoyo que recibí, y por la oportunidad y confianza que me brindaron durante este año. Les deseo a todos un año lleno de salud y prosperidad.

Madeline Gonzalez-Garcia, MSW  
Hispanic Advisory Committee Chairperson



# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Family Conference (Institute Day)

By Sylvia Fonseca

You may not be aware that our 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Family Conference (Institute Day) almost did not take place. In a fiscal year that found DCFS's budget cut by 77.8 million dollars, Director Samuels was faced with making hard choices. He reconfirmed his commitment to ensuring this budget shortfall would not impact vital services to the children and families we serve. Therefore, one of the difficult decisions he made was to cut budgets for DCFS sponsored conferences.

In mid-August the Hispanic Advisory Committee, the Latino Consortium and the Conference Planning Committee members called a meeting with External Affairs Deputy Director Bamani Obadele to discuss whether there would be a way to successfully bring this event to fruition given our budget had been cut by 80 percent. Deputy Obadele gave us his full support and offered us assistance with any fundraising efforts to supplement our current budget. He also committed to providing his support through manpower provided by his staff.



*Aric Carrillo and Carlos Guerrero take the opportunity to network at the 16th Annual Hispanic Family Institute Day*

There was limited time for planning and securing presenters. The new Chief of Latino Services, Roberto Sanabria, and the Deputy Chief of Latino Services, Jose Lopez, gave 110 percent of their time, jumping feet first into the frying pan.

No request or task was beneath them; they worked closely with planning members and sought out assistance in areas they were unfamiliar with.

Daniel Fitzgerald, Assistant to Director Samuels, secured Dr. Rosita Marcano as the keynote speaker. She graciously waived her normal \$5000-plus speaker's fee. Presenters prepared dynamic workshops even though they were given short notice about the date of the conference. Exhibitors also came through under these challenging timeframes.



*Maria Vidal De Haymes, Melissa Ludington, Julia Camacho, and Juana Haywood enjoy food and fellowship.*

The members from the Hispanic Advisory Committee and the Latino Consortium stepped up and contributed financial support. Arden Shore, Catholic Charities, Causes, Lifelink Bensenville, along with representative Richard Bradley made monetary donations. Private sector members and Deputy Director Erwin McEwen's AP monitoring unit got involved with distributing the registration information.

The objective of the conference has been to provide a forum to dialogue and learn about the needs of our families using linguistically and culturally sensitive ways to engage them in services, as well as providing a venue for our direct service workers to network and expand their knowledge base. This objective, more



*"Cuca" artist and exhibitor was one of many exhibitors showing off her talents at last year's Institute Day.*

clearly this year than in the past, was the cornerstone that drove us to ensure the success of the annual conference.

On December 3, 2004 at the Lisle/Naperville Hilton the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (Institute Day) took place. There were over 250 participants in attendance; approximately half were from the private sector. While adjustments were made to condense the conference into one day, the quality of the workshops, cultural presentations and exhibitors maintained the high standards and diversity set by previous conferences.

The conference ended with an emotionally moving award presentation to the Latino Youth of the Year, Krissia Pleitez, a young single mother who has overcome an enormous amount of adversity, abuse, cultural and language barriers, and is serving as a positive role model for her daughter and others who know her. She successfully graduated from high school and then completed training in cosmetology. Krissia is working full time, has maintained her own independent housing and continues to be a wonderful mother to her seven-year-old daughter.

## Hispanic Family Institute Kickoff Event

By Roberto Sanabria

The Mexican Consulate of Chicago hosted the kickoff event for the 2004 Hispanic Family Institute Day. Although the Annual Hispanic Family Conferences reach back 16 years, the December 2<sup>nd</sup> kickoff was the first pre-conference gathering. The kickoff was a call to the greater Latino community: Latino community-based organizations, Latino elected officials, Latin American consulates, as well as the Latino religious communities. The goal was to cast a broad net in order to bring the community into the planning process and to showcase the ongoing work of DCFS and POS agencies which are providing effective and culturally relevant services to Latino families across Illinois.

Contributors that helped make the event successful include Cook County Commissioner Roberto Maldonado, the Jose Maldonado Children and Family Center, the Mexican Consulate, the Peruvian Consulate, Atotonilco Restaurant, the Von Humboldt Elementary School's Steel Band, and Cook Central Region staff.

The kickoff was the brainchild of Cook Central Regional Administrator Petra Porras. Andy Martínez of Special Events emceed the event, and introduced both Mexican Counsel General Carlos Manuel Sada-Solana, who welcomed the guests to his government's consulate, and Director Bryan Samuels who affirmed the commitment of DCFS to continue its support for future conferences and for work in the Latino Community.



*DCFS Director Bryan Samuels and Meyer Diaz enjoy the first-ever Hispanic Conference Kick-off event.*

## Hispanic Worker of the Year: Carmen Izquierdo

DCFS permanency worker Carmen Izquierdo was honored as the Hispanic Worker of the Year at the 2004 Hispanic Family Institute Day in recognition of her hard work and commitment to the Latino community.

Carmen started as a caseworker at DCFS in 1983. Although she left the Department in 1986 to work for St. Augustine College, she returned to DCFS in 1999. Regarding her overall experiences with DCFS, she said, "Some things have not changed – for example, we still don't have enough Spanish speaking workers to attend to the Spanish speaking clients, and we still don't have enough Spanish speaking foster homes or other services in Spanish, although the services now available are a vast improvement over what was available in the 1980s."

Regarding obstacles and challenges at DCFS, Carmen says that, "The toughest challenges I am experiencing are in the areas of SACWIS, and in finding adult placements for our 19-year-olds who have mental health issues."

Carmen was born in Cuba and came to the U.S. in November 1962 with her younger brother under the Waiver Visa program, also known as the "Peter Pan Project." She and her brother were placed in a Catholic Charities foster home until they were reunited with their mother in August 1963, after she arrived in the U.S.

Carmen graduated from St. Gregory High School in Chicago, obtained a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU), and has done graduate work at NIU in family and community counseling. During the 1970s and 80s, Carmen was a volunteer member of the community council at the Edgewater-Uptown Community Mental Health Center, served as secretary to the Edgewater-Uptown Community Council and steering committee, and volunteered as a co-leader for the only Spanish-speaking

Parents Anonymous group in the Chicago metropolitan area at the time.

Carmen is the proud mother of a 37-year-old young man who works in law enforcement and a 29-year-old daughter who is an Early Childhood teacher. She also has three grandchildren.

When asked to share a particularly rewarding experience that she has had with a client or family, she said: "I have had several rewarding experiences with clients, but this one stands out in my memory: In the 1980s I had a difficult case with a family that had seven children. After returning the children, I had to take them away again for violation of the order of supervision; the mother had issues of alcoholism, but eventually she completed services and the family was reunited. Even though the mother seemed appreciative of my efforts toward the end, I always thought she would hate my guts forever, because I had to remove the children for a second time when she violated the order of supervision. I returned to DCFS in 1999, and shortly thereafter received a phone call from the mother, stating she had been looking for me for years to thank me for the difference in her family's life and told me that her oldest daughter was doing the internship for her Master's in social work at DCFS. I had not recognized the girl, because the last time I had seen her she was 10-years-old, and now she was a beautiful young woman. This young woman brought tears to my eyes when she told me that I had been a worker who really cared, and because of the difference I had made in their life, she had decided to study social work and work in child protection."

"Children are the most precious resource any nation can have," says Carmen. "Children are the most helpless of victims, and as child welfare workers our mission is to make sure that they are protected, cherished, nurtured and encouraged to grow up to be the best they can be."



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## Roberto Sanabria, Chief of the Office of Latino Services



The book *Nuestra Comunidad Puertorriqueña en Chicago*, lists my family as the first Puerto Rican presence in the area. My great granduncle, John Marcial Sanabria, left San Germán and came here to study medicine at Rush University in 1900. He dropped out after only a semester, but later enjoyed a career as a successful concert pianist.

I was born and raised in the gentrified Latino community of Lake View. While I was an undergraduate, I studied for a semester at the Universidad Ibero-Americana, in Mexico City and later for an academic year at the Universitat de Barcelona, in Spain. I returned to Chicago from Champaign-Urbana with a degree in Spanish language, and made my home in what was then the Latino community of Wicker Park. Following in the footsteps of my ancestor, I attended law school at DePaul only to drop out a semester later. My plan was to become an immigration and civil rights lawyer, but the high cost of tuition and books put an end to that.

Since I can't play the piano, I took a position at the Latino Youth Alternative High School in Little Village where I taught Spanish and Puerto Rican History for the next six years. While there, I became a fan of the work of the great Brazilian philosopher, activist, and pedagogue Paolo Freire. His thoughts continue to influence my work today. Consequently, I believe that education, as well as most everything, is inherently a political act. Young people, specifically young Latinos, can be trained to become uncritical thoughtless fodder for factories and the service industry, or they can grow into roles as proactive and reflective critical thinkers engaging the world and learning as they go along.

After my tenure at Latino Youth, I taught Puerto Rican History and Advanced Placement Spanish for 10 years at

Roberto Clemente Community Academy. Between 1992 and 1999, I earned both a masters and a doctorate in adult education, which allowed me to teach graduate education courses at National-Louis University and undergraduate Latin American history courses at DePaul University. In 2002, I was selected to receive a Fullbright Teacher Exchange Scholarship in Argentina, however, I never left Chicago due to the selection committee's inability to find someone appropriate to exchange places with me (I believe Argentina's financial crisis played a role in that).

Today, my home is on the Paseo Boricua between the two 57-foot tall monuments to the Puerto Rican Flag, and I have no plans to move. I serve on the Board of Directors of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center of Chicago and on the Lindeman Center – a network of professors and community activists working for progressive social change. Moreover, I was one of the original members of Vida/SIDA – a community-based alternative health clinic for people living with AIDS in the Puerto Rican community. Soon, if Alderman Muñoz follows up with me, I will also be on the Board of Directors of the Latino Youth Alternative High School – the institution where I cut my teeth.

I see my role as the Chief of Latino Services as an unwavering continuation of my pedagogical and activist trajectory. In order to nurture and maintain the integrity of our community, Latinos must be self-determined and critical. The very nature of the Hispanic Family Conferences speaks to this. In the context of the conferences, we as Latinos become the experts in our field; we become the people who determine what knowledge is with respect to Latino service issues. Consequently, we should determine in which manner Latino families are to be approached and engaged.

My vision of OLS is to take the office to the community. I have always been a

great fan of community empowerment. Although people gain skills and become experts in fields, these fields are not static and lay dead in a vacuum. If people's knowledge of social work is not intimately connected to the life and culture of a community, their knowledge becomes stale and obsolete. The greater Latino community must be a partner in determining the trajectory of OLS. Fortunately, I don't have to re-invent the wheel. When I came to OLS, there already existed the framework of a working relationship between our office and the Latino Consortium – which is heavily skewed toward the grass roots. I simply have to tap into that and nourish the connection.

Moreover, José López, Deputy Chief of OLS, Cecilio Pérez, Child Welfare Specialist in Springfield, and I have begun to conceptualize an effort to bring OLS to the rest of the state. Eventually, we hope it will lead to a more organized and comprehensive structure that focuses our attention and our will toward much needed reform statewide.

I see this office as the lynchpin that pulls together our hopes and launches our efforts. Nonetheless, I come here with a sense of humility. I know that along with OLS, the members of the Hispanic Advisory Committee have carried the torch through the years. These past months, I have grown to respect and count on the expertise of the HAC members with whom I have worked. I look forward to learning and growing even more through our continued meaningful collaboration. As our people are fond of saying ... ¡El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido!

*\*Only two weeks prior to press time, Roberto Sanabria made a transition from OLS to the Office of Affirmative Action, where he now serves as the Special Assistant to the Director. We at Noticias wish Roberto Sanabria "Muchísima Suerte".*

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## Jose Javier Lopez, Assistant Chief of the Office of Latino Services



Upon joining the Office of Latino Services (OLS) this past October, I immediately went to work on the DCFS Hispanic Family Institute Day celebration and got my feet wet helping put together last year's event. I had a strong interest in joining DCFS in part because I enjoyed attending the DCFS Annual Hispanic Family Conferences in the past. The workshops were very informative and gave me the perspective of DCFS employees. I saw how dedicated the DCFS workers were in taking care of children. I, too, have been in a position of helping the Latino community. I hope to use my experience and knowledge of the community to promote the services at DCFS. In the past, I have been involved in the creation of many community organizations and associations and have served as a board member on a few of them. The areas of my community involvement include education, migrant

rights, small business development, interpreter issues and state employment.

The Office of Latino Services has a long history of providing services to the Latino community. We are currently working on a plan to continue offering these services and expanding into other areas. OLS needs to increase the number of outreach activities to the Latino communities in Illinois. I hope to help expand training to address services to limited English language speakers statewide and become more involved with the recruitment of Spanish-speaking foster parents to meet the needs of Latino children in DCFS care.

Prior to joining DCFS, I was the Assistant to the Illinois Department of Human Services' Secretary on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. I reported on the delivery of human services to Latino communities throughout Illinois and monitored compliance under the Quiñones and Perdomo Consent Decrees. Prior to that,

I served as Chief of the Bureau of Latino Relations in the Office of the Ombudsman. I oversaw inquiries and complaints, monitored bilingual services at all local DHS offices and facilities, translated materials for both the Departments of Human Services and Public Aid, managed the Spanish hotline, recruited prospective bilingual applicants for vacancies, monitored the DHS Translator Bank, and maintained relationships with community organizations serving Latinos in Illinois. I began my state career as a caseworker for the Illinois Department of Public Aid. Prior to that, I was a student counselor for the Chicago City Colleges and a paralegal for the Legal Assistance Foundation in the immigration and citizenship field. I received a degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Illinois, in Chicago. I am currently the President of the Illinois Association of Hispanic State Employees. I can be contacted at 773-292-7868 if you have any questions.

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## Arden Shore: Language Appropriate and Cultural Sensitivity Services Plan

Arden Shore Child and Family Services currently provides language appropriate and culturally sensitive services to ensure that Department clients receive services in compliance with the Burgos Consent Decree. Arden Shore offers services to any Cook or Lake County Latino children in foster care, residential or group home facilities to compensate for providers that do not have adequate bilingual capacities or services. The services include a wide range of bilingual therapeutic and case management services, translation and interpretation, and a milieu of other culturally sensitive and appropriate services. The Department will determine when to deploy Arden Shore staff based on the need to respond to the Burgos Consent Decree and the number of children to be served. Arden Shore will provide up to a maximum of 3,520 total hours of services a year including travel time, but services cannot exceed 1000 hours in any of the

given categories of therapy, case management, translation or other related services. The types of services offered are extensive, and include: a *Bilingual Therapy Services Package* that includes assessment, development of treatment plans, individual and family therapy and treatment review; a *Bilingual Case Management Services Package* that includes case management obligations such as attendance at court and other related meetings/staffings, family visits, completion of various sections of service plans for ACRs, other agency-specific paperwork, and linkage to additional bilingual and culturally appropriate services. Translation and interpretation services is also available to providers, children and their families for case support and ancillary services. *The Linguistic Appropriate, Cultural Sensitivity and Milieu Services Package* includes sensitivity training and modeling for staff and management, and cultural enhancement/preservation services, including



Arden Shore staff members Cindy Recinos-Alegre, Jennis Marichal and Martha Lucia Aristizabal

mentoring, tutoring, recreational and social activities and country-specific demonstration kits that include music, videos, books, games and posters. Referrals should be made to Jose Candelas, Associate Deputy Director of Field Operations, at 312-793-5637. More information can also be obtained from Arden Shore, Carlos Argueta, at 847-549-1730.

# A Message From Service Intervention

By Tim Gawron

Early in October, Director Samuels presented the vision for child welfare reforms in DCFS. Central to the reforms is the notion that we adopt a “lifespan” focus in our efforts. With children, especially older children and youth remaining in care longer, it is important that we act as good parents would act in paying attention to all needs – physical, educational, recreational, social and emotional – that our wards might have. The Division of Service Intervention is designed to respond to those needs through services and supports and to make sure that these resources help wards become solid, healthy individuals.

In the last issue, the Division of Service Intervention and the range of services that have been brought together were described. One focus in particular is the area of emotional and behavioral health, a key aspect of the lifespan focus and an important part of any child’s growing up to become a healthy and productive person.

The Behavioral Health Team was formed early last June and includes a psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist and two clinical social workers, all of whom have had extensive experience in the field of mental health care, including program development and administration. The purpose of the Behavioral Health Team is to develop a comprehensive mental health system as part of DCFS, its programs, processes and service contracting efforts.

During the last few months, the Behavioral Health Team has reviewed existing services and programs, developed a conceptual framework to guide its work and helped develop the Department’s focus on the impact of trauma as a very important aspect of the emotional well being of wards.

The impact of trauma on children and their development has been studied and

researched, especially over the last five or six years. The *ACES Study* (1998) and the work of Frank Putnam, MD provide clear evidence that if a child grows up in a home with acute trauma experiences, he or she is at great risk of having emotional, social, behavioral or physical problems as a result of that serious stress throughout their lifetimes if the trauma is not addressed.

Acute trauma experiences include growing up in a home with:

- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- An incarcerated household member
- An alcohol or drug abuser
- Someone chronically depressed, suicidal, institutionalized or mentally ill
- One or no biological parents
- Emotional or physical neglect

Many of our wards have come into our care explicitly because they have had these traumatic experiences. We know, too, that even if their family life at home has been difficult, there is stress and trauma for children and youth when they are removed from their biological parents and placed in foster care.

Trauma untreated can lead to physical ailments, problems with school, increased risk behaviors, alcohol and substance abuse, behavioral, social and other emotional problems. In child welfare, treatment services aimed at identifying and resolving issues related to trauma are vital. Early recognition and treatment can significantly help a child achieve success in school, at home, with friends and in the future.

The Behavioral Health Team will be working with others in the Division and throughout the Department to provide

training for child protection workers, case managers, foster parents and service providers to help them understand the impact of trauma and to learn what kinds of treatment approaches work best with these problems at different ages. The Behavioral Health Team will also be helping to design our service contracts to ensure that these services are available for wards throughout the state. We will keep you posted about our progress in this very important area of our children’s lives.

## DCFS Director Samuels Speaks at Arden Shore’s Annual Meeting



Arden Shore held its 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Membership in November 2004. The meeting featured DCFS Director Bryan Samuels as guest speaker. Director Samuels spoke about the reforms he hopes to implement that are designed to actualize the lifetime approach to child welfare. He stated that the changes will “be wholly driven by the needs of the children and youth in state care. When fully implemented the system will more completely fulfill society’s obligation to provide for these children as strong parents should.”



# Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Practice with Latino Children and Families: A Child Welfare Staff Training Model

By Luis Barrios

Great news for child welfare staff, supervisors and court personnel in Illinois!

Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work, in collaboration with DCFS, the Consulate General of Mexico and the Latino Consortium received approval for their grant proposal filed this past summer with the Children's Bureau. This is one of four awards given nationwide by the Administration of Children and Families. Loyola and its partners proposed to develop, field test, and evaluate a culturally responsive, competency-based training curriculum to prepare child welfare supervisors, front-line staff and court personnel to work effectively with Latino children and families.

The training curricula will incorporate contemporary scholarship regarding Latino cultural factors relevant to child welfare practice such as: family structure and process, risk and protective factors, communication patterns, migratory experiences, acculturation stress and the assimilation process, racial and ethnic identity, and help-seeking behaviors. It will also address relevant population characteristics and population-specific research regarding service system barriers, legal issues, and practice theories and techniques. The goal of this training grant project is to enhance and expand system and practitioner capacity to effectively serve Latino children and families involved with the child welfare system.

The training curricula will be field-tested with the public and private agencies and courts, and evaluated for its effectiveness in developing knowledge, skills and culturally relevant competencies

necessary to achieve safety, permanency and well-being for Latino children and families.

The grant has a three-year plan with the first year dedicated to the development of the curriculum and training model. The second year will include field-testing of the curriculum and training model and development of videos, a training manual, and other companion resource materials. The third year will focus on implementing the training curriculum statewide, evaluation of the program and development of a web page to support the ongoing learning of the training participants and dissemination of training materials and resource information to a wider audience. In addition to Loyola, the following academic institutions received a similar award: Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California; The University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc. in Lawrence, Kansas; and the University of Texas in Arlington, Texas.

According to Professor Maria Vidal de Haymes, Project Director and primary investigator for this project, "Loyola's proposal faced strong competition from other academic institutions in the nation. The selection process was subjected to a comprehensive scrutiny from federal officials as well as a rigorous evaluation from peer groups." She further commented that, "The university is grateful for the support of other partners as their interest, commitment and active support helped secure this



*Thanks to a grant from the Administration of Children and Families, Luis Barrios, Maria Vidal de Haymes, PhD, and Bob Mindell will develop, field test, and evaluate a training curriculum to prepare child welfare workers to work effectively with Latino children.*

important award." Furthermore, she stated, "This partnership helps demonstrate Loyola's clear commitment to developing a culturally responsive, competency-based training curriculum to prepare child welfare practitioners and court personnel to work effectively with Latino children and families. The leadership and staff involved in the preparation of this proposal can, and should, take great pride in this achievement."

For additional information about this project, please contact:  
Maria Vidal de Haymes, Ph.D.  
Professor and Loyola Faculty Scholar  
Loyola University Chicago  
School of Social Work  
820 N. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60611



# Illinois Begins Implementing its Program Improvement Plan (PIP)

By Joan Nelson-Phillips

Illinois has just begun the process of implementing its Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in response to findings from the Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The CFSR is a federally mandated review process that measures each state's compliance with the State plan requirements under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

The CFSR focuses on two primary areas: Outcomes for children and families served by the state's child welfare system, and systemic factors that directly affect the state's capacity to deliver services leading to improved outcomes. Outcomes are focused on children's safety, permanency, and child and family well-being. Systemic factors address the extent to which a state has successful operating systems in place to support the achievement of such outcomes. Illinois went through the CFSR process the week of September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

Like other states that have participated in the CFSR process, Illinois was found to not be in substantial conformity with all of the federal outcomes and systemic factors measured. While Illinois did not pass any of the seven federal outcomes measured, it did pass two of the six national data indicators as well as five of the seven systemic factors measured.

A PIP is a comprehensive plan that details those actions a state is pledging to make in order to fully address all of the outcomes or systemic factors determined not to be in substantial conformity as a result of a CFSR. Federal legislation requires states to develop a PIP that is two years in duration. Legislation also requires states to submit quarterly status reports to the Administration for Children and Families

(ACF) to inform them of the state's progress in implementing the provisions of the PIP.

Illinois initiated the development of its PIP in November 2003 through the formation of various workgroups, which were comprised of Department, Purchase of Service (POS) provider staff and other community stakeholders. The PIP workgroups were centered on those case practice themes and systemic areas found to be in need of enhancement as a result of the CFSR. The Latino Consortium was represented among the approximately 160 individual stakeholders who participated in the PIP workgroups. The Illinois PIP was approved by ACF in November 2004.

Some of the crosscutting initiatives that are detailed in the Illinois PIP include the Integrated Assessment Program, Systems of Care Initiative, Foster Care Contract Strategy, Illinois Children's Mental Health Plan, and Intensive Stabilization Strategies.

The Illinois PIP monitoring plan includes provisions for the implementation of quarterly reviews using the Outcome Enhancement Review (OER) process for the duration of the Illinois PIP. A random sample of intact and placement cases from both the Department and private sector will be reviewed each quarter. Twenty-five cases from two regions, one Cook and one downstate, will be reviewed each quarter for a total of 50 cases. Review teams will be comprised of staff in quality assurance or other program monitoring capacities within the Department. Additionally, POS staff trained in the OER process will also be invited to participate in quarterly OER reviews.



## Hispanic Advisory Committee Members

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Héctor Vázquez, Secretary

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Juana Haywood  
Kenneth Martín-Ocasio  
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Cecilio Perez  
Milagros Rivera

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José Candelas  
D. Jean Ortega Piron

## Las Octavitas

By Miriam Mojica

The Hispanic Advisory Committee (HAC) sponsored their 4<sup>th</sup> annual “Las Octavitas” celebration on January 21, 2005. Las Octavitas is a cultural tradition that calls for the Christmas season celebration to be extended eight days after the Day of the Epiphany known as the “Three Kings Day” (Dia de los Reyes Magos).

Sixty-three bilingual staff and guests attended the celebration even though there was a storm announced for that day. The objective of this celebration was to provide an opportunity for new and senior bilingual staff to network, share their experiences, and meet the HAC Committee members.

A lot of preparation went into this event and HAC members paid all expenses. As the chair of the Employee sub-committee I felt that it was important to bring our staff together and allow them the opportunity to express and share their experiences in a neutral and supportive environment and also to network with their peers.

Feedback received from attendees includes: “The activity was great!,” “...the activity gives (me) the chance to see friends and colleagues,” “You are doing an excellent job!,” “...the food was great!,” “Great for socialization!,” “... seeing faces, especially old ones!,” “Bringing everyone together in a relaxed atmosphere and Latinos unidos is the key,” and “Yes! it helps build relationships!”

Additional activities for bilingual staff were also planned, including the Summer Picnic 2005. If you have any ideas for new activities, please forward them to Miriam Mojica via email at [MMojica@idcfs.state.il.us](mailto:MMojica@idcfs.state.il.us).

## Loyola Reception Honors Maria Vidal De Haymes

By Madeline Gonzalez-Garcia

On October 13, 2004 Loyola University and Loyola’s Multicultural Alumni Resource Committee held a reception to honor Maria Vidal de Haymes, Ph.D. Dr. Vidal de Haymes was the Peña Award recipient from the 2003 DCFS Hispanic Family Conference, and was inducted into the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund’s Alumni Hall of Fame in October 2004. Dr. Vidal de Haymes acknowledged this achievement and the many other projects in her life that could not have been accomplished without the support of her family, colleagues, and students.

The evening included a panel discussion on “Social Work with the Hispanic and Latino Population” with the objective to bring about awareness for social workers working with our families. The panelists were: Dr. Vidal de Haymes, Martha Escamilla-Arias of the Davila Children’s Dialysis Center; Mauricio Cifuentes, a social work coordinator for St. Anthony’s Programa Cielo; Bridget Colacchio, a second year MSW student at U of C; and Susie Gomez, a representative from the Latino Social Workers Organization (LSWO).



*Dr. Maria Vidal de Haymes speaks prior to the panelist discussion and reception honoring her induction into the National Hispanic Scholarship Fund’s Hall of Fame.*



*Martha Escamilla-Arias, Dr. Maria Vidal de Haymes, Bridget Colacchio and Mauricio Cifuentes network at the reception honoring Dr. De Haymes.*

The panelists also encouraged participants to “think outside of the box”. Many clients are not able to follow through with services, but not because of their own choosing. We must go the extra mile and be prepared to give more than 100 percent in working with our families. More importantly, remember that cultural sensitivity is very important in our work with the Latino community.

A strengths-based perspective was the core message when working with the Latino community. The panelists provided participants with helpful information and recommended that we recognize the resilience of our people. The three cultural values that contribute to resilience are: 1) some power gives meaning to our life; 2) understanding one’s role in the family, and 3) knowing that what ever is happening, it is happening for some reason. The bottom line is empowering our clients.

The evening ended with the LSWO providing information about the opportunities for those interested in working effectively with Latinos. The organization provides cultural competence education to assist in looking at strengths and obstacles, and encourages celebrating culture and distinguishing differences.



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# Latino Children and Bilingualism

By Lourdes Torres

Despite a lot of rhetoric about the impact of globalization on our lives and the acknowledged realization that to be a citizen of the world, one needs to speak more than one language, the U.S. is one of the few nations in the world that for all intents and purposes treats bilingualism as if it were a handicap or disease rather than an important asset. Worldwide, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm and monolingualism, speaking only one language, is the exception, characteristic of only a minority of the world's peoples. While we often repeat the truism that the United States is a country of immigrants, in fact, 82% of the US population is monolingual. Bilingualism is an important resource and we need to do all that we can to encourage Latino children to maintain their Spanish language abilities as they work to also develop their English language skills.

Being able to speak two or more languages gives one the opportunity to approach different cultures from a comparative perspective and also offers an advantage in the job market. From a cultural, security, and economic perspective, it is in the best interest of society to have as many bilingual individuals as possible in order to participate in an ever expanding global economy, give us a unique insight into other cultures, and help us to make connections with people from other countries. From a psychological and affective perspective, bilingualism is an essential ingredient for the maintenance of healthy Latino families. Children who are bilingual can talk with their monolingual relatives who speak only Spanish. Bilingualism thus helps to promote family communication and strengthen family ties.

One misconception concerning bilingualism is that it leads to mental confusion and arrested cognitive development; the truth, however, is that many cognitive and affective benefits

emerge from bilingualism and multilingualism. The research on bilingualism consistently demonstrates that 1) Bilingualism is associated positively with greater cognitive flexibility and awareness of language. 2) Fluent Bilinguals outperform limited bilinguals and monolinguals in standardized tests and grade point averages. 3) Children who are fluent bilinguals early on have higher academic aspirations and self-esteem throughout their academic careers. 4) Language loss can destroy a sense of culture and of self-worth. Chicana writer Gloria Anzaldua puts it this way, "If you really want to hurt me talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language." Anzaldua powerfully underscores the intimate relationship between language and culture. Latino children who grow up in the United States are better adjusted if they are encouraged to develop their linguistic and cultural ties to their Spanish-speaking cultural heritage as they learn English. In this way they can participate fully in both American and Latino cultures.

We need to be sensitive to the bicultural, bilingual context of Latinos. Latino children often grow up speaking and hearing two languages. Some times they mix the languages (code-switching) in one sentence. This is perfectly normal and happens all over the world where people are immersed in a bilingual and bicultural context. Latinos are very creative with language and enjoy mixing languages and creating new words (spanglish). We want children to develop their language skills so that they can participate in both informal and formal situations. We need to communicate to our children that there are many ways of speaking that vary according to the situation; and what is most useful is learning as many different varieties of language as possible to use in different situations. The varieties we might speak at home and the code-switching we

engage in are fine for informal situations when we are with families and friends. But it is also very important that we learn and use more formal varieties of Spanish and English, which will permit us to participate comfortably in a greater range of school and work settings. So the point is that instead of criticizing the language and ways of speaking that Latino children learn at home, they need to be encouraged to develop their home language and add to the language varieties they speak and write.

How can we best help Latino children to develop their bilingualism? Parents and caretakers should make sure that children participate in many situations where both Spanish and English are spoken. They should point out to the children that different languages are appropriate in different situations. Children quickly learn that Spanish is appropriate in some situations, English in others, and that both languages can be used in other contexts. Children should be encouraged to read and write in both languages and to watch television programs in both languages. Children learn best when they interact with others, so caretakers should try to find activities where children will have to use both languages. Chicago provides many opportunities for children to engage in both English and Spanish cultural activities. These activities help children develop their language skills at the same time that they learn about culture. When we help raise children bilingually, we are not only promoting the health of the Latino family, we are also preparing these children to meet the multilingual and multicultural challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the United States.

*Lourdes Torres, PhD., is Director of the Latin American/Latino Studies Program at DePaul University. She conducted a workshop on Latino Children and Bilingualism at the 2004 Hispanic Family Conference (Institute Day).*

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